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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes an apprenticeship program that encourages and perpetuates West Virginia folk arts. The program is an ongoing project administered by the Augusta Heritage Center located on the campus of Davis and Elkins College in West Virginia. Folk art is the artistic expression of values shared by communities of people. In West Virginia, folk art traditions include music, crafts, dancing, food preparation, folk architecture, and tales and legends. A panel meeting twice a year awards apprenticeships to qualified applicants who are matched with master folk artists. Twenty apprenticeships, some still ongoing, were funded through the program in 1989 and 1990. Fourteen master folk artists are featured through brief biographies that describe how they learned and mastered the art. The specific folk arts featured include fiddling, shape note singing, banjo playing, white oak basketry, fiddle bow repair, old-time singing, stone splitting, musical instrument construction, blues music, guitar, Hungarian cimbalom music, and overshot weaving. There are numerous photographs in this booklet. (LP)

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THE WEST VIRGINIA FOLK ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

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The West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program

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Do you remember when your Dad bought you your first tool box, and the satisfaction you got from finally getting that nail to go in straight. Or when your Mother sat you on her lap and showed you how to make little tiny stitches in the hem of your skirt. You were an apprentice. You were learning something directly from someone else who had more experience than you did. And depending on how good a job the "master" did in allowing you to learn, you may have become a competent carpenter or seamstress yourself. This type of instruction is the most effective and satisfying form of learning, but modern educational systems have removed the benefits and opportunities for such experiences.

The Augusta Heritage Center has rekindled the fire under apprenticeship learning with its Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program. The diversity and craftsmanship transmitted through the program to the most qualified applicants assures West Virginia Folk Artists continuity in their traditions of excellence. The Division of Culture and History is indeed proud to be a part of this tradition and applauds the efforts of Davis and Elkins College, The Augusta Heritage Center, and the Master Craftsmen mentioned in this booklet for instituting such an important program.

/Bill Drennen

W. M. Drennen, Jr.
Commissioner

The West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program

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Folk arts thrive in rural and urban settings of the Appalachian Mountains in West Virginia, where customs and traditions from the earliest Scots-Irish, English, Afro-American, and German settlers exist alongside the folkways of more recent ethnic arrivals. It is the purpose of the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program to encourage and perpetuate these activities through the time-honored practice of apprenticeship. The West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program is an ongoing project administered by the Augusta Heritage Center. The program receives financial assistance from the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, with major funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Division and the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis and Elkins College. Private contributions are gratefully accepted.

Folk art is the artistic expression of values shared by communities of people. In West Virginia, folk art traditions include music, crafts, dancing, food preparation, folk architecture, tales and legends, etc. The music might be regional or ethnic. The crafts might include decorative needlework, medicinal practices, basketry, etc. All of these activities may be defined as folk arts by their purpose, the manner in which they are practiced, and the way in which they are shared.

These communities of people, who originate and practice folk arts, may be defined in different ways. They may all have the same occupation. They may all have the

same religious orientation. They may all live in the same area or region. They may be of the same ethnic background or all be members of the same family. These people, connected through one or more of these groups, attain a sense of identity and self respect through the practice and sharing of traditional folk art within their communities, while also interacting with the public at large. When possible, the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program seeks to match master folk artists with apprentices who have a common bond through one or more of these definitive groups.

The West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program has established an application process and review procedure that strives to be fair and impartial. A knowledgeable panel, meeting twice a year, awards apprenticeships to deserving, qualified applicants. Twenty apprenticeships, some still ongoing, were funded through the program in 1989 and 1990. For more information about the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, please write or call the Folk Arts Coordinator.

Gerry Milnes
Folk Arts Coordinator
Augusta Heritage Center

Melvin Wine, Braxton County

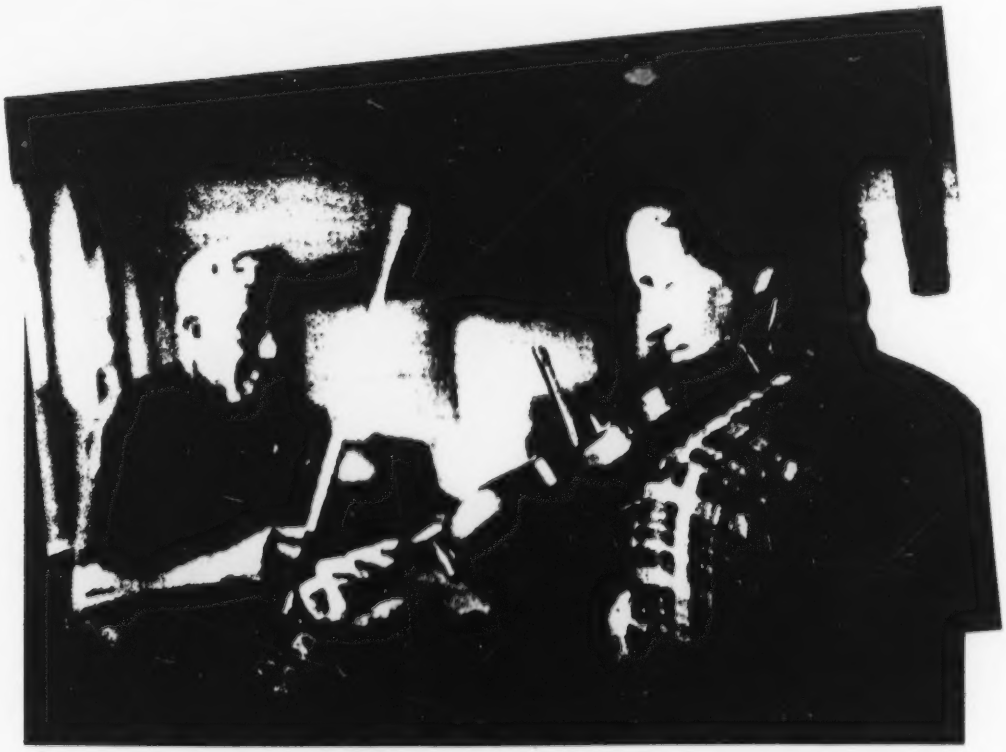
At eighty-one years old, Melvin Wine is playing music that belies his age. He is one of the most respected old-time fiddlers in this country and is steeped in tradition. Many of his favorite tunes came down from his great-grandfather, "Smithy" Wine. Melvin has been sought out by a number of younger musicians who recognize his talent. He has been honored with invitations to participate in the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes at Port Townsend, Washington, and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington, DC. Melvin's music has been documented through a record album on the Poplar label, and recently by a cassette tape as part of the Augusta Heritage Series on the Marimac label.

Melvin's huge repertoire, his mastery of the instrument, and his knowledge of the local traditions and musicians that have influenced his music are remarkable. Raised without benefit of a formal education, he retains a wealth of folk wisdom. He recalls tunes by the way they sound, not by their titles, and the stories which accompany the tunes range from accurate oral historic accounts to folk tales. Both Melvin's music and the context from which it comes provide a wealth of lore pertaining to the musical traditions of central West Virginia.

Melvin and his wife, Etta, have raised a large family of children of their own as well as numerous foster children. His boys Denzil and Grafton play back-up music to his fiddle. Very active in

the church, the Wine children are all good singers and their great-grandfather, Nelson Wine, was a widely respected ballad singer.

Randolph County fiddler John Gallagher has been working with Melvin in this apprenticeship. He is making a sincere effort to learn Melvin's style and repertoire. Melvin feels that John has come along well with his fiddling and believes he has the talent and capabilities to learn his techniques. He seems genuinely interested in passing along the techniques that were taught him by his father, Robert Wine. He often reminisces about those days of his boyhood when his father meticulously saw to it that he didn't "cut short" the phrasing of tunes. Melvin is teaching John in this manner.



Homer Sampson, Gilmer County

Shape note singing is found in numerous rural churches of central West Virginia. This form of singing is a descendant of what was known as "fasola" singing in sixteenth-century England. Originally introduced into New England, the style underwent various changes as it made its way south, eventually incorporating the sounds do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti for the seven differently shaped notes. The singing style involves singing the hymns in a four-part harmony, with the singers being separated out into bass, alto, soprano, and tenor voices. These four parts are written in the "shape notes" that must be learned by congregations through the teaching of a singing master at a special meeting known as a "singing school."

Homer Sampson was born at Booger Hole, in Clay County, in 1907. He presently lives at Shock in Gilmer County with his wife, Meda, and is very active in his community. Having learned the shape notes when thirteen years old, he sang in churches for some time before the need for a singing teacher developed in his community. He decided to take on the job, and has been teaching singing schools ever since, over sixty years.

Through the apprenticeship program, Homer teaches a shape note singing school at the Upper Sleith Methodist Church near the village of Rosedale, about eight miles from his home. Members of several different congregations are taking part. Homer's intent is

to keep this old style of singing alive in his community by organizing and teaching singing schools which have become rare in recent years.

Homer sings with three other elderly folks at churches in the area in the old shape note style, that is, by first singing the notes and then the "poetry." Like other groups Homer has led in the past, they are called the Ray of Hope Quartet.

Shape note singing, once a widely accepted practice that could be easily learned from numerous "singing school masters" who traveled the country teaching schools at churches, has become an endangered tradition in central West Virginia. It has become a folk art in that it is kept alive and passed along by people without the help of formal institutions. Through his participation in the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, Homer is working to encourage the continuation of the practice.

Dwight Diller, Pocahontas County

Banjo playing is an important aspect of traditional Appalachian music. Having been introduced to the state of West Virginia in the nineteenth century or earlier by Afro-Americans, the banjo's driving sound has become an integral part of square dance music while the more placid styles have long been used as an accompaniment to ballad singing.

Dwight Diller, the master artist in this apprenticeship, is a resident of Hillsboro. His apprentice, Ben Carr, from Braxton County, has played the banjo in the three finger or "Scruggs" style for years. He became Dwight's apprentice for instruction in the older "clawhammer" style.

Dwight has been playing banjo for 22 years. As a student at West Virginia University in 1968, his interest was kindled in the traditional music with which he had been surrounded, and he began seeking out older musicians around his home town of Marlinton, WV. His "discovery" of the Hammons Family of Pocahontas County eventually led to a study conducted by the Library of Congress that is a most important documentation of West Virginia folklife.

Dwight's long association with traditional old-time musicians is evident in his personality and his music. He often reflects on experiences with the old timers in his everyday speech

and his playing reflects his enduring association with traditional mountain culture.

Through this apprenticeship, the notable accumulation of banjo tunes and techniques of Dwight Diller are being retained and circulated within the region where this style has developed and grown for the last one hundred and fifty years.

Clyde Case, Braxton County

Clyde Case lives with his wife, Lucy, near Duck, a small community in southern Braxton County. Clyde makes traditional white oak baskets using white oak gathered and worked into "splits" at his farm. Clyde's baskets are uniform and sturdy and of the traditional egg basket style.

As a basket maker, Clyde carries on a longstanding rural tradition. Before the advent of modern packaging and containers, baskets were an essential possession of every farm and homestead and every community needed a basket maker. Although originally designed for carrying eggs, these days Clyde's baskets are in demand by people who admire the craftsmanship. They also serve to remind and connect folks to their mountain culture and country roots.

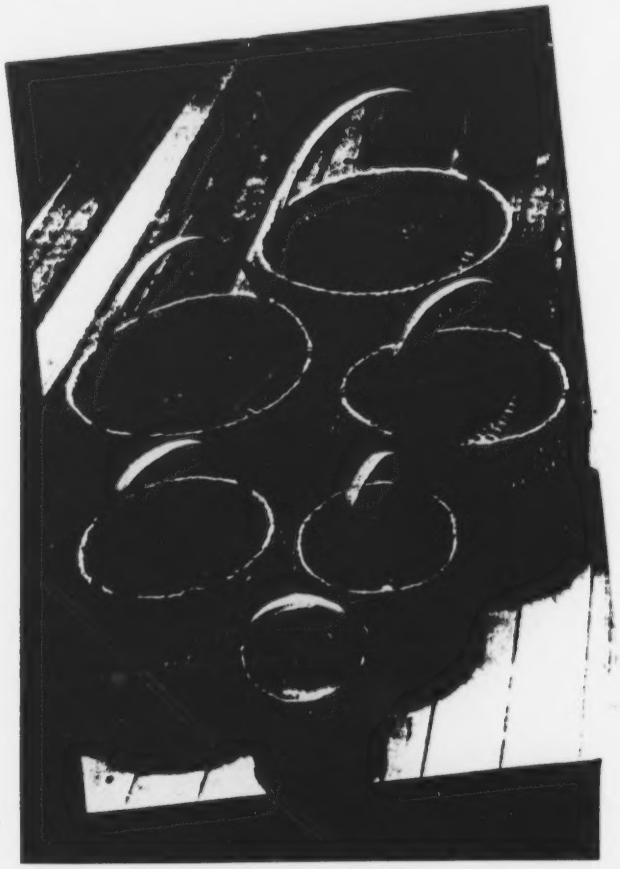
After Clyde retired from painting and carpentry in 1973, he turned his efforts to woodworking and basket making. He laments that he didn't pay more attention to an old basket maker who lived in his community years ago, but has worked out many solutions to basket making problems on his own, and bases much of his knowledge about construction on having carefully studied the egg baskets he carried as a boy on the farm.

Clyde's curiosity and inquisitiveness have helped him develop several techniques and specialized tools that assist him in his craft. Clyde reflects on the basket making craft: *There probably*

is a lot of people that could make baskets, if they were willing to take the time and trouble it is to make 'em. There just ain't very many people that's willing to take the time to do it.

Gene Hall, Clyde's apprentice from Spencer, is a person who seems to be willing to take the time. Clyde has taught him how to select trees and make splits, how to finish up the splits and make the rims for baskets, and has given careful supervision to the many construction techniques needed to weave sturdy egg baskets. Gene is well on his way to becoming a competent basket maker, having now made over a dozen on his own.

Besides his basket making, Clyde has a multitude of traditional talents which include chair making, old style banjo playing, ballad singing, and teaching shape note singing schools.



Dayton Howes, Upshur County

Dayton Howes is one of the best fiddle makers in the state. His instruments have found their way into the hands of some of the best country fiddlers in the area, as well as classical violinists. Although he shies away from publicity, Dayton's skill at repairing and restoring fiddles and bows is common knowledge among players, who keep him busy with work. He has taught fiddle and bow repair at the Augusta Heritage Center's summer workshop program, and has spent considerable time with students in his shop at home.

In this apprenticeship, Dayton is teaching bow repair and rehairing to Charlotte Cobos of Doddridge County. This includes such tasks as repairing frogs, broken tip repair, rewinding grips, bow refinishing, and rehairing. The process of rehairing a fiddle

bow involves the careful execution of a tedious procedure. Dayton has a preference for Siberian bow hair, which he considers to be the best grade of hair he can obtain, and he disdains the synthetic materials which are now available.

In talking with Dayton, one gets a sense of his integrity in the field of violin making and bow repair, and his respect for the violin and bow making techniques that have traditionally yielded quality work. When explaining his techniques, he refers to his experience continuously, and it is obvious that all his methods are tried and true. Firmly rooted in the methods of the old masters, Dayton's craftmanship has developed during the last 16 years in which he has intensified his involvement and dedication to the craft.

Dayton's father, Clyde, is also a fiddle maker and has made over 100 instruments. Clyde's fiddles are unique in that he often whittles animals and birds into the headstocks and backs of the instruments. Both Clyde and Dayton are musicians and pretty fair country fiddlers themselves.

Dayton's shop is at his home, which is on a hill about 8 miles from Buckhannon in Upshur County. In this apprenticeship, Charlotte travels to Dayton for instruction and has completed many of the tasks he has outlined for their study together.

Phoeba Parsons, Calhoun County

Phoeba lives "on the waters of Bear Fork" near Orma in Calhoun County. At 81 years old she still keeps house in a remote location. She was "borned" on Wildcat, just across the hill from where she now lives. She comes from a musical family as her father fiddled, danced, and beat the fiddle sticks. Her brother, Noah Cottrill, is a fiddle and banjo player. Phoeba has played the banjo since childhood and has retained a repertoire of old-time songs learned during her lifetime. The Cottrills were an early pioneer family on the West Fork in Calhoun County.

Phoeba is a remarkable example of a mountain woman who exudes the old-time culture of central West Virginia. Her music, her speech, her dancing (she once knew thirty different steps), her stories, and her personality are all worthy of documentation. In this apprenticeship, not only the songs, but the special feeling that Phoeba has for her music is being conveyed to the apprentice.

I went to school a little bit one fall, and a little bit that spring, and a little bit the next spring and a little bit the next fall. Now, that's all I went to school and I didn't have no books to go in but a spellin' book a lady give my mother.

I learn't that SILVER DAGGER from my Great Uncle Harvey Simmons and I couldn't write very good, you know, I never got much schoolin'. I could write a little enough to tell, you know, what

I's a-writin'. I just had ten cents and I said if you'll let me write it down and you word it off, I'll give you this ten cents. That was a lot of money then, for me or him. He said OK, and he sung it here and yonder and didn't sing it all together and my sister noted half of it and I noted about half of it. All right, we got together and we kept on until I learn't it. That is a true song they said.

Ginny Hawker, of Glenville, has shown considerable talent as a singer, and enjoys the friendship and trust of Phoeba. In this apprenticeship Ginny is learning songs from Phoeba's old-time repertoire. Additionally, a valuable opportunity to document important lore from the early settlement of Calhoun County, plus the art and personality of Phoeba Parson, is coming to pass.

Franklin George, Roane County

Frank George started playing traditional music at a young age through the influence of his grandfather, W. W. George, in Mercer County, West Virginia. His father helped him along by making a banjo for him when he was a boy. Frank plays both fiddle and banjo and is recognized as one of West Virginia's outstanding traditional musicians. Most of his repertoire consists of music from the West Virginia-Virginia border around Bluefield. He

credits other area fiddlers besides his grandfather as having influenced his style.

The traditional fiddle tunes that Frank keeps in his repertoire would have been played and recognized 100 years ago by fiddlers in Appalachia and the British Isles. Frank has a keen interest in the history and background of his music and has become very knowledgeable about these roots. He and his wife, Jane, continually research the sources of mountain music and the genealogies of the mountain families who play it. Frank has helped many scholars researching tunes and styles that have been lost in the British Isles, but are preserved by mountain musicians in Appalachia.

Frank says that he would rather play hornpipes than any other kind of tune, but his repertoire includes numerous tunes in reel (4/4) time. While in the U.S. Army and stationed in the British Isles, he took a strong interest in the fiddle and bagpipe music he heard there, but lately says he's settled back into playing the Appalachian music he grew up with.

John Buckley has been a student of Appalachian music for some time and has relocated to the Spencer area within the last year to be able to work with Frank. Through this apprenticeship, they are formalizing and intensifying John's learning of Frank's music. They have also collaborated to document the music of other area old-time musicians.

Dare Crawford, Calhoun County

Dare Crawford lives on Crummies Creek near Sand Ridge in Calhoun County. According to Crawford, there are cellar houses all over the county which he and his father built. He also did stone work while working in a government youth work program during the Depression. He can point out a bridge crossing a run to his house where he had split out and laid rock, the last he had worked with. Dare inherited many tools from his grandfather, who was also a stone splitter. He relates a story of how his grandfather had carried a piece of steel bar stock on his back, all the way from Spencer (25 miles), to make his steel wedges. Dare himself does some blacksmithing, and says he likes to make wedges out of old hack (horse drawn buggy) axles. Having a forge is also handy to keep his tools sharpened.

Ben Carr, who is apprenticing with Dare, had been actively seeking out a stone splitter since working with rock on the home

he has built in Braxton County. Ben also has an appreciation for the old hand-cut rock around his community. Having worked some with rock, Ben is very interested in learning more about the craft and began asking around about the stone cutters in the area. After meeting Dare, Ben found that he still had his old tools, and he seemed intrigued with the idea of having an apprentice.

At 77 years old, Dare executes the steps needed to split rock with resolution. He instructs Ben about the importance of reading the grain in the rock and he is able to explain his every move using terminology specific to the trade. He warns that the rock will "spraw" or "shiv" if worked incorrectly and he quotes his father's reaction to certain situations. He shows Ben how to set the wedges a certain way for the rock to split correctly and later, when major splitting is done, he demonstrates how to "dress" or finish the rock.

Through this apprenticeship, this traditional craft is being handed down to still another generation so the traditional knowledge will be preserved for future use.

Gilbert Stiles, Taylor County

Every community of musicians needs someone in their area to repair and build instruments. Gilbert Stiles serves this function in northern West Virginia. A native of the area, Gilbert has moved around the country during the sixty-two years he has been doing woodworking. He has been building musical instruments for the last thirty years, most of that time while living in Florida. He returned to West Virginia in 1981.

Gilbert was a respected guitar maker and repairman while living in Florida, and made and repaired guitars for several well-known performers. His guitars have very impressive craftsmanship and design. He has done a fair amount of experimentation with his instruments and speaks knowledgeably about design components that affect sound quality. He has built both electric and acoustic guitars as well as banjos, mandolins, acoustic basses, and pedal steel guitars.

Gilbert's shop is attached to his home and is large and well equipped with wood and metal working tools. He customarily makes the metal fittings to go on his instruments. He is continually inventing and making tools (such as gauges) to help him in his instrument construction. He has a machine he designed and built to grind tools for his pantograph machine. He impresses one as a very capable wood and metal worker.

In this apprenticeship, Gilbert is instructing Tucker County

resident Maurice Brown. Together, they are designing and constructing a series of mandolins based on what is known as the A-model pattern. "Riece" has some previous experience and skills in instrument construction and repair, having taken courses at the Augusta Heritage Center's summer workshop program. He is learning all aspects of Gilbert Stiles' mandolin design and construction techniques, including the theory of the designs.

Most of Gilbert's knowledge and skills have come through his own experience as a woodworker, and through his years of experimentation as an instrument builder. Many of his instruments end up in the hands of capable musicians, and his methods and techniques involve much hand work in the individual crafting of the instruments. Riece hopes to continue his study to include guitar making.

Nat Reese, Mercer County

Photo by Doug Yarrow

Born in Salem, Virginia, in 1924, Nat Reese migrated with his family to the coalfields of southern West Virginia where he took up music at an early age. He remembers such well-known musicians and singers as Memphis Minnie and Bessie Smith who traveled and performed in the region. He credits a blind blues singer known only as "Blind Charley," of Itman, WV, as being a major early influence. Nat has played with various blues musicians and pop and swing bands throughout his music career. Lately he has been recognized as one of West Virginia's leading singers and instrumentalists in the blues genre and continues to play the distinctive style more commonly heard in the early twentieth century.

Nat has been designated a "Master Artist" in West Virginia's Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program and is working with blues harmonica player Bob McGraw. Recently they have thrilled audiences together at the Vandalia Gathering, West Virginia's showcase of traditional music in Charleston, and at concerts with other notable blues musicians during "Blues Week" at the Augusta Heritage Arts Center, in Elkins. "Just a Dream," a record documenting Nat's music, has been released on the Augusta Heritage label.

Nat says that he and Bob had been "hanging out" and playing music together for quite some time and that he thought Bob has come a long way in learning his tunes and style. Bob, who lives in

nearby Richlands, Virginia, has formalized his sessions with Nat through this apprenticeship, and now spends several evenings a week at Nat's Princeton home learning his repertoire and approach to music. Bob is a high school English teacher and a serious student of the blues.

Nat Reese has always been generous with his music. In addition to having taken on Bob McGraw as an apprentice, he is teaching other area people blues guitar. Nat also works with underprivileged youths at Pipestem on a regular basis through a church-related program.

Tom King, Braxton County

Tom King has played guitar all his life and has performed as a back-up guitarist with most of the best-known old-time and bluegrass musicians in the state at festivals, fiddle contests, and music gatherings. He has recorded with many of the younger traditional musicians in the area, and has taught guitar at workshops in the region.

Guitar playing, especially when used to back up fiddle and banjo music, has been a tradition in West Virginia since the turn of the century. Not nearly as old as fiddle music, which came with the first settlers, or banjo, which had its beginnings in the mid nineteenth century, the guitar has become a standard instrument in the traditional string band sound associated with mountain music. Very few fiddlers today are comfortable playing without a back-up guitar, and the rhythm it creates is an essential part of dance music, which itself is the traditional purpose for much of the music.

Kate Long, Tom's apprentice, had some previous musical experience on the guitar and autoharp, although she is better known as a singer and writer of songs dealing with West Virginia themes. Kate lives in Charleston, which is an hour from Tom's home, and travels there on a regular basis for instruction.

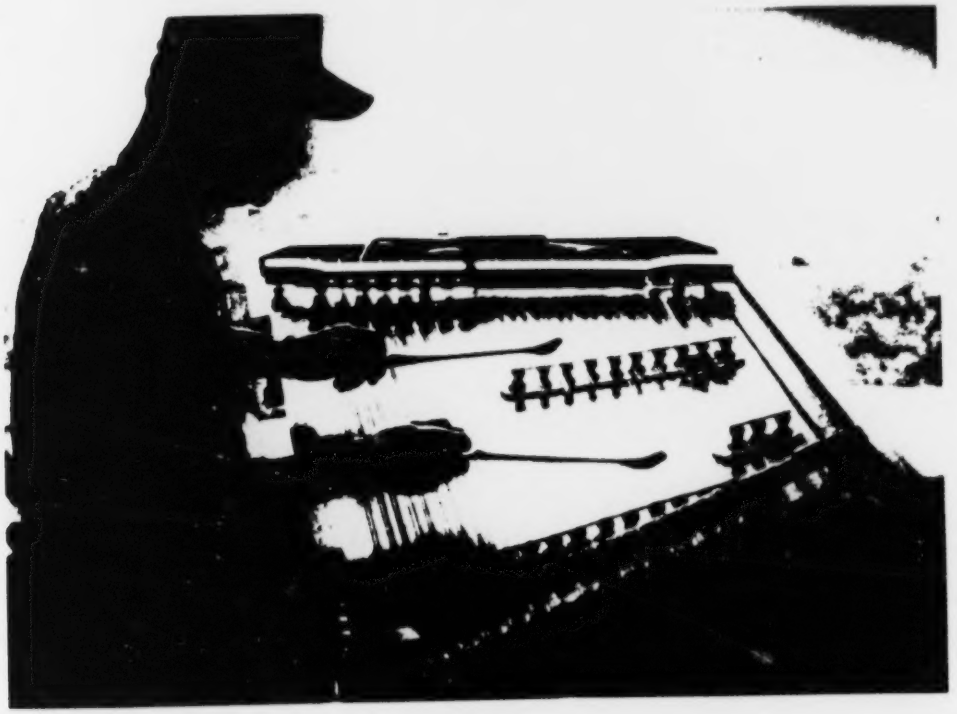
Kate Long has the talent and promise of becoming a solid

back-up guitarist and is learning the bass runs and "licks" from Tom that are used to accompany fiddlers. Good quality rhythm guitar players are taken for granted by most, and there is a shortage among the traditional musicians of the state.

Joe Fulaytar, Marion County

Joe Fulaytar lives with his wife Kathryn at Barrackville, in Marion County, WV, and has been playing music all of his life. Born in Pennsylvania, Joe moved to West Virginia with his parents as an infant. Both his parents had immigrated from Hungary. They met and married before locating in the coalfields of Pennsylvania, and then, West Virginia.

Joe took up the button accordion when very young, but was "locked in a room" with a cimbalom at thirteen years of age. He remembers being forced into learning the instrument by his father, who wanted him to replace the elderly cimbalom player in the community's Hungarian band. Eventually this band solidified



as "Charles Bendcsak Es A Ciganyi Zenekard" (Charles Bendcsak and his Gypsy Entertainers). The band traveled widely throughout the northern West Virginia coalfields with occasional trips into Pennsylvania and as far south as Beckley. During this period, the band was in great demand to play at christenings, dances, harvest festivals, bacon roasts and other traditional community functions. The old traditions are fondly remembered by Joe, especially the harvest festivals and bacon roasts.

Joe likes the traditional sound of Hungarian music and insists that only stringed instruments should be used to play it. Recently, clarinets have crept into the few existing bands in this country. The old style Hungarian and "Gypsy" bands consisted of only three violins, a bass violin, and a cimbalom. There was a "first violin," a "second violin," and a "contra violin." This latter instrument did not play the melody, but rather played an upbeat to the down beat of the bass. Joe also plays the violin in the Hungarian style. Much of the music is in minor keys.

Joe keeps his cimbalom set up in his basement where he plays numerous Hungarian folk songs and chardashes (dance tunes). He also sings in Hungarian and is able to translate the meaning of the old songs in English.

Joe's apprentice is his daughter, Patricia Bonafield. She has recently taken an interest in family and Hungarian traditions and is traveling from Terra Alta to Joe's Barrackville home to learn on the old family cimbalom. Joe has decided to will the old instrument to Patricia. Despite the diverse influences around him, Joe has faithfully maintained his Hungarian repertoire. He is proud of his ethnic heritage, and is instilling in Patricia a pride in their Hungarian roots.

Phyllis Marks, Gilmer County

Phyllis Marks lives at Glenville in Gilmer County. She is 62 years old and is blind, but has the hope of regaining some sight through future operations. Her seeing eye dog, Sarah, accompanies her everywhere.

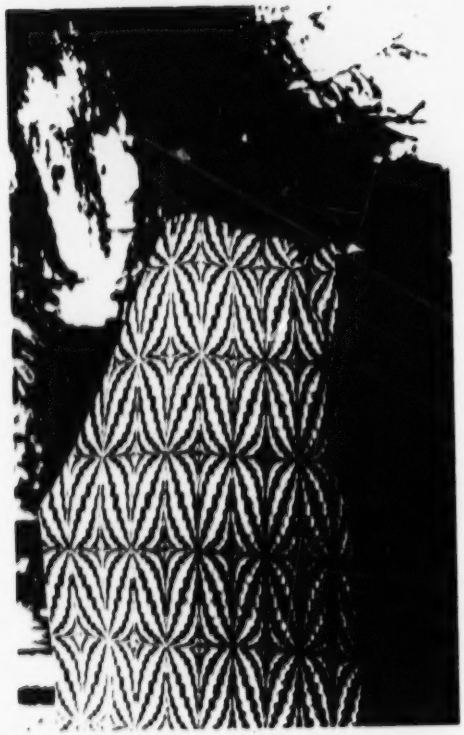
Phyllis maintains a remarkable repertoire of old songs and ballads, ditties, recitations, and humorous stories. She says that she has to sing constantly to keep from forgetting her material, because she can't depend on a notebook to retain the words to songs. Most of her songs have come down from her mother, grandmother, and her father-in-law. These include everything from old-world ballads to humorous parodies of Civil War era songs.

Phyllis has sung at the West Virginia State Folk Festival, in her home town of Glenville, for years. She has performed at the Augusta Heritage Festival, the Berea Celebration of Traditional Music, and Seed Time on the Cumberland in Kentucky.

Sonja Bird, Phyllis' eleven-year-old apprentice, is a native of Webster County, and lives at Cowen. She is a gifted singer and has a keen interest in old-time songs, having learned some from her grandfather. She has performed old-time songs at her school and at the local Cowen Railroad Festival's family night. With the help and approval of her parents, Sonja is learning many old songs from Phyllis' large repertoire. At each session, Phyllis sings Sonja some songs to tape and learn, and Sonja returns to sing them back to Phyllis.

This apprenticeship provides an opportunity for Sonja to expand her repertoire and benefit by getting to know the personality and wit of Phyllis Marks. Phyllis states that her meetings with Sonja are something for her to look forward to, and she welcomes the opportunity to pass her songs and material on to the younger generation. Sonja's parents are assisting with transportation for their visits.

Donna Morgan, Randolph County



Donna is a native and resident of Randolph County, living near the rural village of Helvetia. She credits fellow Randolph Countian and octogenarian Olive Goodwin as having the most influence on her weaving, having done an apprenticeship with Olive. Donna's mother, also a weaver, got her started in the late 1960's. Over the years she has also worked and learned from other Randolph Countians: Elizabeth Barlow, Clare Stalnaker (both deceased), Sadavoie Godwin, and Willetta Hinkle. She has left the area to study weaving, most recently spending six weeks in Sweden learning to weave linen. Donna is a longtime member of the Mountain Weavers Guild, headquartered in Randolph County.

Since the industrial revolution, hand weaving as a traditional utilitarian mountain craft has faded in this region. Most weaving done in the last forty years has been to produce pieces for aesthetic reasons and to preserve the art as part of traditional mountain culture. Donna has traditional ties to weaving, having learned her craft from family and community members. Some of the weavers she learned from participated and wove in the Homestead Project, a Roosevelt-era cottage industry directed by Eleanor Roosevelt and administered by the federal government.

Since the early eighties, Donna has been on her own as a

weaver. She sometimes demonstrates weaving to home economics classes in the Randolph County schools. She participated in the Randolph County Bicentennial by demonstrating weaving in the school system, and she is currently teaching an evening weaving class at Davis and Elkins College.

Donna co-teaches weaving, with Olive Goodwin, during the Augusta Heritage Center's summer workshops. It was here she met Brenda Baisi, who is now her apprentice. Brenda had rug weaving experience as a child on her mother's loom. In this apprenticeship they are concentrating on traditional overshot weaving, and Brenda is producing a variety of samples using the different techniques she is learning. Occasionally Brenda travels to use Donna's looms, but most of their work together is at Brenda's Philippi home, on Brenda's loom.

AUGUSTA HERITAGE CENTER

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